

# THE VAULT-KEEPER'S GRIM FAIRY TALE!

HEH, HEH! WELL, I SEE IT'S TIME FOR ANOTHER IDIOTIC INFANTILE INBREDITY... ANOTHER CHILDISH CRUELTY... ANOTHER GRIM FAIRY TALE! I'VE CHOSEN A DELICIOUS ONE FOR YOU THIS TIME... ONE THAT OUGHT TO TROUBLE YOUR MIBS! IT'S CALLED...

## A Sock for Christmas



ONCE UPON A TIME, LONG, LONG AGO, IN A HUGE BEAUTIFUL CASTLE, THERE LIVED A KING, HIS QUEEN, AND THEIR ONLY SON, THE ROYAL PRINCE! NOW, SINCE THE YOUNG PRINCE WAS THEIR ONLY SON AND HEIR TO THE THRONE, THE ROYAL COUPLE SPOILED THE BOY! WHATEVER PRINCE TARTY... FOR THAT WAS HIS NAME, WANTED, HE RECEIVED! WHATEVER HE DID WAS NEVER WRONG! AS THE KING PUT IT...

TARTY IS THE ROYAL PRINCE! HE CAN DO NO WRONG!

THE YOUNG PRINCE PUSHED ME INTO THE CASTLE MOAT, YOUR MAJESTY! IF HE WERE MY CHILD, I'D WHIP HIM BLACK AND BLUE FOR...

WELL, HE'S NOT YOUR CHILD! HE'S THE ROYAL PRINCE! THE ROYAL PRINCE DOES NOT GET WHIPPED! UNDERSTAND?

Y-YES, YOUR MAJESTY? THANK YOU, YOUR MAJESTY!

HMPH! THE NERVE OF HIM SUGGESTING THAT I WHIP DEAR TARRY...

WELL, IRVING! ACTUALLY, THE BOY DESERVES A WHIPPING! HE JOINED THE PRIME MINISTER'S NEW OUTFIT!

TOO BAD! IF THE PRIME MINISTER IS SO ANNOYED TO WHIP SOMEONE, LET HIM WHIP HIS OWN CHILD.

BUT IT WAS TARRY WHO...



JOHN, WHY DON'T I'VE GOT IT! I'VE GOT THE ANSWER TO OUR PROBLEM! COME WITH ME, TARRY!

IRVING! WHERE ARE YOU GOING...

THE KING ORDERED HIS COACH! THEN, HE AND THE YOUNG PRINCE DROVE DOWN FROM THE CASTLE INTO THE PEASANT VILLAGE FAR BELOW...

MAKE WAY... MAKE WAY...

IT'S THE KING!

...AND THE COACH THE YOUNG PRINCE!



THE KING POKED HIS HEAD OUT OF THE COACH AND SCANNED THE SEA OF FACES BEFORE HIM! SUDDENLY, HE POINTED...

YOU! COME HERE!

HE POINTS TO THE JARBY'S CHILD!

WHAT DOES HE WANT WITH HIM?

THE KING STARED DOWN AT THE SMALL BOY BEFORE HIM... THEN AT PRINCE TARRY... THEN AT THE BOY AGAIN! WITH A GRUNT OF SATISFACTION, HE NODDED...

YES? VERY GOOD! VERY GOOD? WHERE IS YOUR FATHER OR MOTHER, YOU RABBITPUP?

I AM THE BOY'S FATHER, YOUR MAJESTY! WHAT... WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH HIM?



THE BOY IS COMING WITH ME... TO THE CASTLE! HE WILL LIVE THERE... AS PRINCE TARRY'S COMPANION!



NO! NO! HE IS MY SON! YOU CANNOT TAKE HIM FROM ME!

WOULD YOU DENY YOUR SON THE ADVANTAGES I CAN OFFER HIM? GOOD FOOD? GOOD CLOTHES? AN EDUCATION?

N-NO! BUT... BUT...



THE COACH DOOR SWUNG OPEN... SET IN, BOY! I COMMAND YOU!

THE KING ORDERS YOU MY SON!

NO... SON... FATHER... SOB... NO...



THE BOY'S FATHER PUSHED HIS YOUNG SON INTO THE COACH...

DO NOT GRIEVE, SON! IT IS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD! WILL WE BE ABLE TO SEE HIM AGAIN, YOUR MAJESTY?

AT CHRISTMAS! HE WILL LET HIM COME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS! FALL REJOICE, OY ADMIN AN!

MADE WAY... MADE WAY... MAY...



THE BAKER'S SON WAS TAKEN TO THE CASTLE! BUT WHEN HE ARRIVED, HE SOON FOUND OUT THAT THERE WAS MORE TO IT THAN JUST BEING SPOILED. PRINCE TARRY'S COMPANION? THERE WAS A CATCH...

... AND FROM NOW ON, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE COURT, WHEN PRINCE TARRY IS ASID, HE IS TO BE WHIPPED! BUT... YOU WILL NOT WHIP PRINCE TARRY! YOU WILL WHIP HIS COMPANION HERE! YOU WILL WHIP PRINCE TARRY'S WHIPPING BOY!

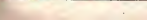


AND SO, THE FIRST WHIPPING-BOY CAME INTO BEING! THE POOR BAKER'S SON BECAME PRINCE TARRY'S WHIPPING SUBSTITUTE! ANYTIME TARRY WAS SAD, THE WHIPPING BOY WAS PUNISHED...

SOR... SOB...

THAT WAS... UHNS... WRONS... OF YOU... UHNS... TO PUT THE... UHNS... CAT... UHNS... INTO... UHNS... THE OVER, TARRY!

YES, ROYAL CHEF! I WON'T DO IT AGAIN, ROYAL CHEF!



NOT ONLY WAS THE WHIPPING-BOY THRASHED FOR PRINCE TARRY'S MISDOINGS! THERE WERE OTHER SUBSTITUTIONS...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU ANTE BATHS? YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE A BATH! NOW, COME ON...

JUST ONE MOMENT, ROYAL WASHMEN! OH, WHIPPING BOY...

YES, PRINCE TARRY!



THE WHIPPING-BOY HAD TO SUBSTITUTE FOR ALL OF THE PRINCE'S DISTASTEFUL RESPONSIBILITIES...

SPINACH IS GOOD FOR YOU! YOU MUST EAT YOUR SPINACH, PRINCE TARRY!

YES, ROYAL DIETITIAN! OR... WHIPPING-BOY?

PASS ME YOUR FLUTE-CHOKER, PRINCE TARRY.



SUMMER PASSED, AND FALL CAME TO THE KINGDOM AND WITH IT GAME...

GO TO SCHOOL? I HATE SCHOOL! THE ROYAL WHIPPING-BOY WILL ATTEND SCHOOL FOR ME, ROYAL TUTOR! ROYAL WHIPPING-BOY!

YES, PRINCE TARRY! WHEN DO I START, ROYAL TUTOR?

TOMORROW MORNING, ROYAL WHIPPING-BOY! EIGHT O'CLOCK!



AND SO, THE WHIPPING-BOY EVEN HAD TO GO TO SCHOOL FOR PRINCE TARRY! THERE WASN'T ANYTHING THAT PRINCE TARRY DISLIKED THAT HE HAD TO DO! THE ROYAL WHIPPING-BOY DID THEM ALL...

YOUR ROOM IS A DISHAPE, PRINCE TARRY! YOU'VE GOT TO CLEAN IT UP!

ROYAL WHIPPING-BOY...



BUT WORST OF ALL WAS WHEN PRINCE TARRY HAD BAD JOY PURPOSE... JUST TO SEE THE WHIPPING-BOY RECEIVE THE WHIPPINGS...

AND... I HOPE... THIS TEACHES YOU... A LESSON... YOUR MANN!



FINALLY, WINTER CAME! THE FIRST SNOW BLANKETED THE CASTLE AND THE SETTLE GROUNDS...

IT'S ALMOST CHRISTMAS TIME, PRINCE TARRY! SOON I WILL SEE MY MOTHER AND FATHER AGAIN...

...AND SANTA CLAUS WILL COME AND FILL MY STOCKING AND BRING ME PRESENTS!



...AND SANTA CLAUS WILL FILL MY STOCKING AND BRING ME PRESENTS!

NO, NO! LISTEN TO THE WHIPPING-BOY! DON'T YOU KNOW THAT SANTA CLAUS DOESN'T BRING THINGS TO BAD LITTLE BOYS?



BUT I HAVEN'T BEEN BAD!

YOU'VE BEEN PUNISHED, HAVEN'T YOU? I'VE SEEN IT! I'VE SEEN YOU WHIPPED A DOZEN TIMES OR MORE A WEEK! ONLY BAD LITTLE BOYS GET WHIPPED! I DON'T GET WHIPPED! I'M GOOD! SANTA WILL VISIT ME... NOT YOU!



FINALLY, ON THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS, A COACH BRINGS THE BAKER'S BOY...THE WHIPPING-BOY... DOWN FROM THE CASTLE TO THE VILLAGE PARISH... TO THE CHILD'S MOTHER AND FATHER...



MY BASTY!  
MY BASTY!

MY SON!  
MY SON!

MOMMY!  
DADDY!

I'LL BE  
BACK TO  
PICK HIM  
UP TOMOR-  
ROW MORNING!

SOON, HE'D TOLD HIS MOTHER AND FATHER ALL ABOUT THE CASTLE AND WHY THE KING HAD BROUGHT HIM THERE...

AND SO, IF HE'S BAD,  
I GET WHIPPED FOR HIM!  
BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE  
ME BAD, DOES IT, FATHER  
MOTHER?

OF COURSE!  
THE  
NOT MY  
CHILD!



THEY SANTA CLAUS  
WILL FILL MY STOCK-  
INGS...AND HE WILL  
BRING ME PRESENTS!

WELL, OF  
COURSE,  
WE  
DO...  
MY  
SON!  
WHY  
SHOULDN'T  
HE?

BECAUSE, PRINCE  
TERRY SAID SANTA  
WOULDN'T! HE  
SAID THAT BAD  
LITTLE BOYS GET  
WHIPPED, AND  
SINCE I GOT  
WHIPPED...

NEVER YOU  
MIND, MY  
SON! GO...  
HANG UP  
A STOCK-  
ING...  
THE BRIGHTEST  
ONE YOU  
CAN FIND!

AND SO, WITH TEARS OF JOY  
STREAMING DOWN HIS LITTLE FACE,  
THE ROYAL WHIPPING-BOY HUNG  
UP A LARGE THREADBARE STOCK-  
ING...

NE FOMER! YOU  
KNOW WE HAVE NO  
MONEY! HOW  
COULD WE

MUM!  
SUSSENERMAN!  
THE BOY WILL  
HEAR YOU!



THEN HE CLIMBED INTO HIS BED AND FELL FAST  
ASLEEP...A FAINT SMILE ON HIS TEAR-STAINED FACE.

HOW COULD YOU PROMISE THE  
BOY, BERNHART YOU KNOW  
WE'RE BROKE! HOW HE'LL  
EXPECT SANTA CLAU TO  
FILL HIS STOCKINGS AND  
GIVE HIM PRESENTS!

THE KING SHOULD  
DO IT, SUSSENERMAN!  
THE KING SHOULD  
DO IT! AFTER ALL  
THAT BOY'S BEEN  
FORGOTTEN...

...HE OWES IT TO HIM!  
THE KING SHOULD  
FILL MELVIN'S  
STOCKINGS! AND I'M  
GOING TO ASK  
HIM TO...

NE FOMER! COME BACK!  
HE'LL LAUGH AT YOU!  
HE'LL LAUGH.





THE BOY SKIPPED AND DANCED AS HE LED HIS SLEEPY-EYED PARENTS TO THE FILE OF EARLY WRAPPED PACKAGES...



SEE? SEE?

WELL, I'LL BE...

LOOK! A *NOPE!*

INDEED, THERE WAS A PRESENT FOR THE WHIPPING-BOY'S DADDY... BUT IT WAS *NOT QUITE* WHAT HE'D EXPECTED! THE *STOCKING* HANGING OVER THE BUSY OLD FIRE PLACE, *BAGGED STRANGELY!* IT WAS *RED AND SPICY!* AND A *SCARLET STREAK* HAD DRIPPED FROM THE *HOLE* IN ITS TOE TO THE WORN HEARTH...



LOOK, HERRIMERS!

GOOD LORD!

YES... HERRIMERS HAD WANTED THE *KING* TO FILL MELVIN'S *STOCKING*, SO SANTA HAD *GIVEN* HIM WHAT HE WANTED...



AND SO... THAT NIGHT...

HE... HE LAUGHED AT ME, SLOOOOHHHHHH!

COME TO BED, HERRIMERS!



BUT, THE NEXT MORNING...

DADDY? BOBBY? WAKE UP! WAKE UP! SANTA WAS HERE!

WELL? WHAT?

WHAT DOES IT SAY, HERRIMERS?

IT SAYS "MERRY CHRISTMAS, MELVIN! SINCE YOU WERE THE PRINCE'S WHIPPING-BOY, YOU DESERVE *HIS PRESENTS!*" AND THERE'S ONE FOR YOUR DADDY, TOO... JUST WHAT HE ASKED FOR! AND IT'S SIGNED... "SANTA CLAUS!"



HEH, HEH? YES, KIDDIES! MELVIN'S STOCKING WAS FILLED BY THE *DEER*... *DEED* BY *FEED*? *DEED*? THAT'S THE IDEA OF MY LITTLE FAIRY TALE! NOW, WHEN YOU GET UP ON CHRISTMAS MORNING AND LOOK AT WHAT YOUR STOCKING IS FILLED WITH, DON'T BE SURPRISED AT WHAT YOU FIND!



I UNDERSTAND THAT SANTA COULDN'T WRITE *USE*... ALL WE HAD TO DO YOU MIGHT GET SOME *LEFT* OVER STUFF FOR, BY THE WAY! AFTER THAT CHRISTMAS, EVERYBODY IN THE KINGDOM LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER! CAUSE THAT'S THE WAY ALL FAIRY TALES END, EVEN *GRIM* ONES! 'BYE, NOW!